

*Supply*

That is the kind of role I think Canadians may want to play from coast to coast, not necessarily to wait for the federal government to put everything on the table in a manner that it might not be able to afford in these particularly difficult times when far too many are hurting and are out of work.

**Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam):** Mr. Speaker, may I say right off that I admire the hon. minister. I think he has done good work for Canada's department. He is honest and straightforward but today is a very shabby performance. I almost would feel sorry for him, defending the indefensible if I did not know that there are other people I should feel sorry for, namely the people who are not going to be able to take advantage of this program.

He said the program is good, it is working. So why is he killing it?

I want to ask him this question because he said money is involved. The Court Challenges Program cost \$2.7 million a year, is that not correct? The minister is nodding, \$2.7 million. The government spends \$870,000 on daily press clippings for the Prime Minister. Why does the government not cut that and put the money in the Court Challenges Program?

**Mr. Weiner:** I am not in the very important job of budget making. What I am in the process of doing is carrying forward in a most appropriate fashion a new department, with increased resources, new personnel from coast to coast, with a lot of ideas and excitement and a partnership of people who hope and pray that this will be their opportunity so that indeed when I set up a partnership with an institution, that that institution will once and for all recognize the diversity of Canadian society and allow them to participate.

We all have our priorities. We all would like to do exactly those things that we would want to do in life. This is a team effort. Budget making is a very difficult proposition.

I am thrilled that the former Minister of Finance is in the House with us today. This is not an easy job. This minister who is with us today took on a job that had to be addressed for some 65 years in this country. For 65 years we had a tax loaded on the backs of the manufacturing sector. We were constantly advised to make improvements, broaden the base, allow all Canadians to participate. He did that.

The current finance minister brought forward a budget at the end of February which did a lot of very effective trimming, a lot of belt tightening. Frankly it left my ministry in very healthy shape. I am very pleased that the word multiculturalism was not mentioned in a very prominent way on February 27.

**Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North):** Mr. Speaker, on February 27, the minister in reply to a question said: "There is now a solid base of jurisprudence for future years". A day later in reply to another question he said: "We have built up a certain amount of jurisprudence". Today he said: "It is debatable and perhaps much more needs to be done". I would like a clarification on that point.

Last, of the 264 cases, 165 on equality and 99 on language, could the minister inform the House how many of these cases were challenges to the government's position and how many of these cases were challenged by the government?

**Mr. Weiner:** I thank the hon. member for his attempt at clarification. Throughout I have used the words "a significant volume of jurisprudence". The hon. member can read my response in *Hansard*.

I will quote a response to an answer I gave the member for Hamilton Mountain: "Madam Speaker, as I said, the Court Challenges Program was an excellent program, a made-in-Canada initiative, to really examine the laws for their fairness, the equality in language laws that were in place. It has done that very fairly, but after almost 300 cases of jurisprudence have been established, one would imagine that we now have a significant volume of jurisprudence". This is the question: Is it significant or not? Did we not set into place something of great importance for this nation?

• (1620)

I would humbly request that with the strength of support from coast to coast, from the provinces, from the Canadian Bar Association, from jurists wherever they are and from community groups, I am expecting that at the end of this day there might be some very new and exciting creativity brought to this very important area.

**Mr. Ian Waddell (Port Moody—Coquitlam):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of the New Democratic Party to speak on this important motion.